

# Is there a link between a mother's mental well-being and their children's?

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UC Berkeley Anthropology Professor Andrew Wooyoung Kim reveals transformative insights into mental health, focusing on the intergenerational effects of mental well-being in Uganda.

Titled "Maternal adverse childhood experiences, child [mental health](#), and the mediating effect of maternal depression: A cross-sectional, population-based study in rural, southwestern Uganda," Kim's paper was published in the *American Journal of Biological Anthropology* in May. It examines the profound link between mothers' adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the mental well-being of their children in rural Uganda, highlighting the mediating role of maternal depression.

"We've uncovered an important link between maternal ACEs and their children's mental well-being," Kim said. "Our findings reveal that maternal depression may play a vital role in transmitting these adverse effects across generations, emphasizing the urgency to prioritize mental health support for these families."

The study not only reveals a [significant relationship](#) between maternal ACEs and [child mental health problems](#) but also shines a light on the potential role of maternal depression in this pathway. The findings are a call to action to address mental health needs, Kim said, particularly in post-colonial areas with histories of societal oppression and elevated rates of psychiatric morbidity.

**More information:** Andrew Wooyoung Kim et al, Maternal adverse childhood experiences, child mental health, and the mediating effect of maternal depression: A cross-sectional, population-based study in rural, southwestern Uganda, *American Journal of Biological Anthropology* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/ajpa.24758](https://doi.org/10.1002/ajpa.24758)

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